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ABSTRACT

This study explored the potential of videotape and E-mail technology for developing a course delivery system encouraging personal reflection on the topic of classroom management. Since the process of teaching preservice educators techniques for democratic classroom management depends on a wide array of factors pertaining to individual personality and teaching style, the author argues that such courses call for qualitatively different teaching methods. Several different approaches to having student teachers videotape themselves using democratic classroom management techniques in the classroom are discussed, including different formats for conferencing and evaluation. When it became evident that the students who demonstrated the greatest improvement in their ability to use these strategies were the ones who had chosen to communicate with their professor via the Internet, E-mail communication was added as a component of the research. The nature of student-professor E-mail discourse is discussed in detail, and while the process of continuing E-mail contact with students was found to be time consuming, numerous benefits for students and their instructor were noted. In addition, the emphasis on using technology for preservice education was found to have carried over to the classroom, establishing student teachers as "technology experts" within their schools. (PB)

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It Is As Much the How as the What: Examining My Own Practices for Teaching Classroom Management

by

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Introduction To This Study

For the past decade I have been teaching, researching and writing about democratic classroom management practices and, as a result, have become very interested in whether or not the manner in which this subject is taught is of equal, more or less importance to the process of helping my students develop a commitment to creating equitable classrooms. The question I sought to explore in this study was whether or not the use of technology, specifically incorporating e-mail conversations and video taped assessments into a more standard format, might result in a course delivery system that would encourage personal reflection on the topic of classroom management in order to assess professional skills in this arena.

I particularly focused on incorporating these particular technologies into this class because, with the options currently available, they are the most accessible tools for my students and e-mail allows the most equitable means of one-on-one communications. The Internet has been widely described as being representative of democratic principles because of its availability, ease of use, and the ways in which it levels the field of communication. Video tapes that demonstrate teaching are equally fair as a means of assessment in that the interns in my class can video tape themselves any number of times and select the tape for assessment that they believe best reflects their professional development in the area of management.

This investigation developed into a two-pronged study. My original intent was only to examine the value of video-taped assessments for documenting mastery of management strategies. However, as I will discuss later in this paper, I subsequently added e-mail communications as a course requirement in the hopes

that the personal nature of the exchanges would provide students and me with more frequent and more meaningful exchanges around the topic of management. While the two technologies were incorporated into the same class, I do not believe students enrolled in the class saw the technologies as being interdependent but rather two separate activities within the same class. Although, they were treated as separate requirements in this study, I believe they do provide synchronous benefits to this course delivery model.

Where I Began

It is important to stipulate that the approaches to classroom management I emphasize in my classes are typically viewed as falling within the parameters of "democratic education." The interpretation I bring to this broad definition is that classroom management decisions begin with students being taught to exercise their human rights while ever cognizant of how those rights are always balanced against our social responsibilities. Students have rights in public schools and should be taught what those rights are. Young people also need to develop a sense of what Lawrence Kohlberg referred to as the "social contract." In my class, the strategies and models presented and discussed are selected on the basis of the role they might play to assist young people in their personal character development.

I emphasize character education as opposed to behavioral strategies. I believe the first is a productive way to help young people learn responsible decision making while the latter has more to do with external controls of behavior. I accentuate the importance of individual control over behaviors and accordingly, in my class, token reward and punishment systems are viewed as being those strategies least appropriate to learning self management, while democratic models are discussed as being more suited to helping a cognitive being achieve a sense of personal control

through responsible decision making.

The perspective of student self management is typically not one my students have explored before and, therefore, presenting the models and strategies that would sustain a democratic classroom management style requires time be spent encouraging them to consider new ideas to incorporate into their own paradigms for teaching.

Questing for the "Best" Course Delivery System

Seeking a "best" way to teach democratic classroom management practices has led me to experiment over the years with various styles of course delivery. Ten years ago, I began teaching classroom management by using a standard lecture/testing format but I became increasingly certain that this was not the most effective means to deliver and assess the course content. Class interactions seemed superficial and essay tests proved to be ineffective tools of evaluating understanding of the topic. I found too many of my students parroting my ideas rather than engaging in their own reflective process.

Next I tried having students write a paper at the end of the term in which they would synthesize the models and methods we had discussed into a personal approach to management. In the second part of the paper, my students were required to create or remember a challenging management situation and apply their philosophy to finding a resolution for the problem they had described. I quickly discovered that my students would typically develop student-centered democratic management approaches only to abandon their ideals for more authoritarian strategies when working to solve the very problems they themselves had created. Clearly, this method was less than successful for helping my students permanently incorporate democratic management strategies into their teaching styles.

While I always thought it interesting to experiment with different approaches to delivery, my efforts struck me as little more than a cerebral exercise. Then I spent some time visiting the classroom of a teacher who had recently graduated from our one year Elementary Education Master of Arts in Teaching program housed at Oregon State University. When this recent graduate was ready to dismiss her class for the day, she placed herself at the classroom door and read outloud the names of her students. Their names were read in a descending order that corresponded with their scores on the latest spelling test. Those who had done best, she told them, would be dismissed first. The strategy was so grossly out-of-synch with everything any of the faculty had tried to teach in any of the classes she had taken the previous year, that I could only wonder at what might lie behind her choice to employ such a practice. That was 5 years ago, but the shock I experienced watching her is as acute today as it was then.

Why Classroom Management Might Require Unique Course Delivery Systems

To be sure I have no delusions that that teacher was the only one to graduate out of our program and adopt strategies we had attempted to discourage. Classroom Management is unique to the courses one typically finds included in teacher education programs in that it touches upon some deeply personal issues and core values. Learning to treat students fairly in a classroom is not like learning to teach them a new approach to math computation. Treating children in a truly equitable fashion requires teachers to overcome their personal biases and preconceived ideas about children. Some of our preservice interns have always seemed more capable of incorporating democratic management strategies into their teaching styles than do others. At times it seems like a crap shoot as to who might be able to incorporate equitable classroom decision making into their teaching and who might not and I

feel at a loss to explain why some students adopt none of the strategies presented and others, while skeptical, are nevertheless willing to try new techniques.

I recently commented to a friend that the most frustrating part of my job is the feeling that when I teach I am dropping a pebble into a well and listening ever so carefully for the "splash." There is always the nagging sense of being unable to know if any of the information presented in the class is heard, understood, or implemented. I have come to believe that some of this ambivalence can be more effectively addressed through alternative means of course delivery.

While most of my students appear uncertain about incorporating democratic management practices, I have found myself becoming increasingly passionate about the need for equitable classroom decision making. The potential ego-deflation associated with the realization that my passion will more than likely never by theirs does not diminish what I believe is a need for just practices in public school management. For the vast majority of my students an equitable classroom is a 180 degree shift away from all they experienced as students and it is therefore extremely difficult for them to imagine what such a classroom would look like and sound like on a day-to-day basis.

I have learned from written comments on course evaluation forms that my students do notice and appreciate that I work very hard to model the democratic practices in my own classroom, however most remain convinced that the same practices will fail them when they have their own classroom. So I have come to suspect that democratic teachers cannot develop only out of their own philosophical leanings but also require a sense that they can be successful using a paradigm different from the one they may have experienced during their own schooling.

Implementing New Strategies Within Our Masters' Program

In our Masters of Arts in Teaching program, we have the luxury of great flexibility in terms of how we deliver courses. In addition, because it is a small program with a small core faculty, we have many opportunities to work with our students over the course of the one year we are together. I teach a class on issues of equity and law during the summer term, a course in classroom management in the fall, and seminars on legal issues and management during winter. Except for the summer term classes, all course work in our program is directly tied to their field-based practicums. However, it was evident to me that even with the amount of time we had within the program to discuss issues of management and equity, most of our students who have moved on to their own teaching positions have not attempted democratic management strategies in their own classrooms.

All of this led me to begin thinking that how I taught the course, and more specifically, how I assessed it might make the difference in terms of what information was retained and eventually implemented. Restructuring the assessment of the class has been an on-going process over a ten-year period, and led me to increase the use of technology to deliver and evaluate content comprehension.

A New Approach to Assessing Management Skills

I resolved to develop an approach that would require students to demonstrate their emerging management philosophies by video taping themselves using strategies learned in class and elsewhere. The first year I tried this approach, I required that they tape themselves at the beginning of the term, review the tape and set goals for themselves to reach by the end of the term. Then I also reviewed their tapes and provided them with feedback on their work as well as providing some

ideas for extending their goals.

At the end of the term, I collected a second tape from my students that demonstrated how successful they were in achieving their goals. I reviewed the tapes and read the papers they submitted with it in which they discussed their successes and continued goals for growth. I assigned grades to the students based on how well I felt they had done. After two years of using this procedure, I realized that I was on the right track but was still modeling the opposite of what I was teaching. I had put myself in charge of assessing their professional growth, when it would be far more in keeping with the concepts of equity to have them assess their growth.

At the same time, this approach failed to accurately assess achievement because the students were more focused on receiving a high grade than they were in honestly reflecting on what they had learned and what they had gained. The most notable example of this was a student who submitted a video tape that showed her growing increasingly angry as her students talked and ignored her repeated requests for quiet. Finally, she is seen yelling at the students that she has "had it" and that they are to be quiet or.... I was surprised and disturbed that she would have selected this tape as evidence of her professional growth. I wrote a note on her paper that yelling at students does not demonstrate graduate level mastery of management skills and gave her an Incomplete for the course. I invited her to submit a third tape.

As a result of all this experience, I altered the evaluation process one more time. This time I decided to require a one-on-one conference with each student at the end of the term. The purpose of the conference would be to review their second video tapes with them and discuss together their growth in terms of their management skills and areas that still needed attention. The first year I did this, I

had students show me their second video tapes and tell me how the tape demonstrated what they had learned and accomplished during the term. Having students there to discuss with me what was evident on the video tapes worked better than reviewing the tapes by myself. We could engage in an honest conversation about what was being demonstrated on the tape. However, I found that all students were telling me they had done "A" work when in fact some of the tapes did not demonstrate that level of accomplishment. That led to grades based upon my opinion versus their opinions. While I made clear to them that grades and assessment were ultimately my responsibility, I still wanted to develop a method that would help them to more accurately assess their own levels of success, which I feel is a necessary skill for long-term professional success. Although I still felt I was on the right track in regards to effective course delivery and assessment, I knew the process yet required more tinkering.

During the second year of these assessment conferences, a bit of anecdotal data emerged that directly led to the study reported in this paper. I noticed that the students who seemed to show the greatest amount of growth in the area of management as well as the greatest ability to implement a variety of strategies, were also those students who had chosen to communicate with me over the Internet during the course of the term. This e-mail communications had come about spontaneously. I had made my e-mail address available to all our students at the beginning of the program and invited them to use it as a convenient way to get their questions answered. Some students, during fall term, began to send me questions about management problems that were occurring in their site placements. I kept our conversations confidential but would sometimes refer generally to their questions during our regular class meetings. The professional development of the

few students who chose to communicate with me in this fashion was so noticeable that it piqued my curiosity as to whether or not incorporating Internet conversations into the requirements for the course would result in the same levels of growth in a greater number of students.

At the same time, I understood that those students who had chosen to hold conversations with me via e-mail were also those students who were high achievers and who would probably be very successful in any number of course delivery formats. So the impact of the Internet communications on them and the speculation that the growth might have occurred regardless, could not be overlooked. However, I felt that the question of Internet communication as a means to fostering growth in the area of classroom management warranted further investigation. I was particularly interested in investigating whether or not the private communication available on the Internet would help students be more astute in their ability to reflect on their own professional growth.

I decided not only to revise course requirements yet again but to deliberately study the use of technology as a concomitant benefit to the delivery of this particular course content. I already had gathered some data at the end of the previous year's course on how students perceived the process of meeting with me to review their video tapes, so I had some means of comparing the effects of using that strategy on the two groups of students. I also decided to use a triangulation approach that would correlate my perceptions of their reflections on professional growth with their e-mail questions and their responses to a scoring guide I developed to further structure the process. (See Appendix 1)

For the purposes of this study I am defining professional growth in the area of management as being determined by a demonstrated ability of students to employ a

variety of democratic management strategies while teaching. In other words, I should see them using would include setting reasonable expectations for learning and behavior, asking questions of students to help them refocus, and using a respectful tone when engaged in problem solving.

To assist in developing and implementing this study, I sought and secured funding from the L.L. Stewart Foundation. The foundation funds provided me with time to work on the syllabus and scoring guide. The challenge of the syllabus and scoring guide was to create language that set high standards and expectations while, at the same time, it encouraged students to determine their own growth within the established framework. Our university provides students with access to computers in several labs on campus and also provides each student with a free Internet account. Requiring the use of computer technology, therefore, does not discriminate against any student in our program.

Before the class even began, the students were involved in a full-time practicum called "September Experience." Students in our program spend almost a full month with their mentors between the end of Summer term and the beginning of Fall term on campus. At the beginning of September, I distributed video tape permission slips, making it clear that they were not to video tape any children unless parents had given written permission for them to do so. (Appendix B)

I also invited the students to begin submitting questions to me via the Internet whenever they felt the need and those questions began coming in almost immediately. At times it was not unusual for me to find 20 to 25 messages a day on my e-mail and this continued throughout Fall term. Each of the questions required time to read and for me to respond.

I must say that if there is a down side to this form of delivery, it is the time

commitment, which is considerable. I also believe it provides a significant opportunity to interact with students in ways that could never happen during a class meeting and that are crucial if students are going to truly come to terms with what are to them some very new concepts of classroom management. I shared my frustration with a colleague who is also researching the uses of technology for course delivery and his response intrigued me. He stated that what we were trying to do, establishing one-to-one relationships with every student was a worthy endeavor. In his opinion, the problem was not how much time it took to do this but rather the fact that our time was not being invested in a way that is traditionally valued in a research institution. For an assistant professor who is still immersed in the promotion and tenure process, this was perhaps not the most comforting comment, but neither did it discourage me.

What They Wanted to Talk About

The statements students sent in ranged from the despairing cry of "I will never figure this out." to the joyous "Wow, what a great day I had today!" In either case, they were not the sort of comments I would typically have heard during class discussions. My ability to "chat" with students about their ups and downs made the time commitment a worthwhile investment in my mind. What follows are some samples of Internet communication with brief commentary. The exchanges with students have been quoted exactly with no editing of style. Hence, much of it will read as conversation. While students use a more formal style when writing papers, they tend to lapse into a much more informal pattern during Internet chats. In this sense, reading e-mail communications is much like reading their dialogue journals.

I found that Internet communication allowed me the time to develop answers to their questions in ways I would not or could not during class meetings.

In class I would never respond to one student at length particularly if I were trying to challenge him/her on a personal perspective. Students would be so uncomfortable with that much attention that any learning would be subverted.

For instance, this was an early question sent to me. "During today's class, one question kept popping into my mind concerning all the dialoguing we are supposed to be doing with our students, especially in times of stress or conflict. How do we find the time?" The student is referring to various questioning and communication strategies they were reading about or hearing about in class. What made this particular question interesting to me is that it was sent after the course had been running for a couple of weeks and various responses to it had already been discussed in class at least on a couple of occasions.

Answering the student over the Internet allowed me the time to develop the answer more thoroughly and perhaps make the information that much more accessible. My response was as follows. "The larger issue is, why wouldn't you find the time? If that students is not able to learn, is feeling scared, is frustrated, is bored, is going through trauma at home, how will you ever be able to pull him/her into the learning community if you don't decide that child is worthy of your time? What are you there to do? Do you see your role as teaching a nebulous curriculum to whomever is choosing to listen on any given day and giving up on the rest of them? Or are you there for every student? If you say you are there for every student, then you will put your students in groups, give them time to interact with each other, not have all the curriculum play off of you and then you will have the time needed for one on one interactions. But first you have to decide what you are there to do."

At this time I was typically responding to their questions with more

questions, in an effort to encourage their thinking. However, I quickly learned that this method was only increasing their sense of frustration and I altered my approach to providing my students with a balance between direct answers as well as more questions.

As stated earlier, it was not at all uncommon for me to be asked to respond to issues via e-mail that had already been discussed during class sessions. Perhaps the students who asked these questions didn't listen to that particular class discussion but I suspect it had more to do with their "readiness" to understand the issues at the time they were discussed in class. Students never indicated that they had heard the topic discussed before or needed to have something repeated. They always asked questions previously discussed as if the topic had just occurred to them. I recently commented to one of the students that there are no auditory learners enrolled in our program. She responded with the laughter of recognition.

This is an example of the sort of comment students would share over e-mail because it probably would have embarrassed them to share it in class. "I had a very rough and frustrating experience yesterday. I was working with a small math group and took them to the project room, which is an unused room at [my school.] They were just going wild on me! I did my best to remain calm, and I made a point to keep my voice soft. These were two things I felt positive about. However, I had students leaving the circle and crawling on the floor, lots of loud talking, and lots of 'off-taskness.' I became very frustrated and lost my calmness! I almost started crying. I just do not know how to handle it when several students are being very disruptive, I still have students paying attention and wanting to get on with the work, and I can't deal with them all at the same time. I also feel that the fact that I am a student teacher ...causes them to feel as if they can get away with more; I think

they are still testing me a lot. Anyway, any tips or responses would be helpful. I am feeling pretty unsettled about the whole management issue."

As I already stated, the topic of avoiding just such problems by taking the time to first work with students to establish behavioral expectations had been discussed on several occasions prior to the message being sent. Another curious aspect of the question is the lengthy description the student provides me in order to ensure that I will understand the scenario. In class I would never have heard such a lengthy description. I suspect the detail may have to do with the reason the student did not realize the topic had been discussed before. I suspect when students are in the thick of a management problem it appears to them to be unique as well as overwhelming. Perhaps it is that perception that prevents them from associating the problem with strategies they have read about or heard in class.

My response to the question, which follows, reflects the shift in approach I took when I decided to balance providing students answers while still asking questions of them. "Before you go next time, sit down with the group and discuss some common expectations for the behaviors you will see when you get there. When you do get there spend some time developing rules for that room and that activity. Put the rules on poster paper as they are being developed and put them up. Refer back to the rule...if someone crawls away..say 'I want you all to ask yourselves if you are following rule number...' Try asking students to do a 'self-check.' If it's not working, examine your curriculum. Are they bored? Frustrated? Don't be afraid to "bag" a lesson and take them back to the classroom if it's not working. These are really tough [situations] when they happen, but you will get better at it." Again, this response is much longer than I would have time to give an individual student during class.

Students also used the Internet to discuss their readings with me "I've been reading Positive Discipline (Nelsen, 1987). I've only read the intro and chapter one, but so far I am really impressed with the book. The examples are so real and down to earth, and the reading is very easy-yet interesting-that I find it hard to leave it alone and go on to other class responsibilities. "

Then the student continues to reflect on the reading and uses it to critically examine her experience. "One thing I noticed is how easy it is to fall into the modeling patterns of 'teaching what you see.' I've noticed that I feel like students aren't paying attention if they aren't sitting and looking at me (the way they are told to, and consequently do, for my mentor.) I'm not sure why I feel this way (even I don't learn sitting in such a manner.) I think it's simply because I see it modeled. So, I'm going to try hard next week to accept they are listening, even if not staring at me, etc....and know this by asking questions periodically. What do you think?"

The above paragraph is also indicative of the tone in most of the e-mail communications. Not only was the language conversational and casually written, it also, at times, took on a confessional tone.

The nature of Internet communications provided me with the time to support students and respond to their questions at length. That sort of individual attention might be very uncomfortable in a class meeting, but was a natural part of dialogue in this forum. In the following instance one of my students is speculating as to why a child in her field placement site might be reluctant to get his seat work completed. "...I have heard from teachers that his parents do everything for him (he didn't know how to take care of some of his bathroom needs last year on his own.) and I am wondering if he is dragging his heels because he isn't used to doing things on his own and doesn't want to, or if there is something else I should be looking for.

I know that he can do work if he is allowed to pair up with one other particular student, but the teacher doesn't always let him do this (they are across the room from each other). He seems able to do the work easily when he wants to. Is it power then? Sorry for rambling."

My response was: "No problem. This is a pretty thorny issue. Let's look at what we know about him. He is really used to having others do for him rather than doing for himself...so accountability may not be part of his functioning sense of the world. Maybe we're looking at an assumed disability. So then the challenge becomes to help him learn a different way of functioning in a classroom."

The following is an example of a student working to process some management issues and my responses to her thoughts. The Internet not only provided opportunities for conversation but also for mental ramblings. "Hi, Barb. I am sitting here after a Tuesday full of classes, and my head feels extremely dense with loads of new information. So now I am refocusing...Okay, got it. "

My response: "I think this is what brain researchers would call your consolidation time. Appreciate it. It's important for all of us that we do some quiet reflection particularly after overload."

Then the student said: "I have a question concerning giving students choices. You have given a few examples in class of situations which do not really give the student a choice. Can you clarify that for me? What really constitutes a 'choice?'"

I answered: "There are some things upon which we must stand firm and those have to do with our professional responsibilities and legitimate educational purpose. We can't assess a student's progress if we have no product or evidence. So that needs to happen. There is no choice. However, the way it is achieved can have lots of choices. First of all, as much as possible, we should offer choices and present

options in the way students might demonstrate their learning. Projects or other activities related to the 7 multiple intelligences is certainly one way to get at this. And we can give choices about when work gets done. When setting up a classroom, though, we need to make clear our responsibility and how we fulfill it. We fulfill it by presenting a rich curriculum that is assessed through a variety of authentic strategies...but must be assessed. And that's the difference between threatening always to deprive students of recess and taking the time to say 'This is your responsibility and this is mine. How can we work together so we can both do what we need to do?' "

During class sessions I often will encourage students to consider the use of a quiet compliment over a token reward when wanting to let the young people in their classes know a good job has been done. The Internet provided me the opportunity to model a private word of appreciation because students will often share their successes with me through this format and I can give them an electronic pat on the back.

"Today I taught a lesson in Science. Before we began I specifically addressed the expectations I had. They were simple: Soft Voices, Raise Your Hand, Active Listening, Sit Where You Will Work Well, and Use the Water and Materials Safely. I listed all of these on butcher paper and left it posted throughout the lesson. We discussed what each one would look like, especially the 'play with materials safely' since 'safely' is so ambiguous. All I have to say is that doing this five minute expectation introduction was well worth it! I felt that the students were more focused and when they became unfocused all I had to say was, 'Remember my expectations,' or 'soft voices.' "

I responded: "Bravo! So glad this proved to be a successful strategy for you.

Now, next time you might ask them what the expectations should be and write those down. You probably will find they're the same...but the students will have an even greater sense of ownership over them."

Before the students work together with me on the subject of classroom management, we spend a term together studying educational law. I enjoy having the opportunity to tie the two together because I view them as two pieces of the same puzzle. In this Internet communication, a student is demonstrating the ability to build bridges between the two topics.

"Last week in class we discussed the issue of student privacy. We talked about how sharing a student's work with the class is not appropriate unless that student has agreed to it. This sparked a memory in my mind:

"During the first three weeks of my internship I can remember a time when I shared all of the students' work without asking permission from anyone. My mentor had suggested this as a way to share the neat artwork, writing, or other projects that the students were doing. I did not see anything wrong with it. Until... I was showing the class the science folders that the students had made the day before. They were actually very creative. Students had made designs on the folders with construction paper, but they could not use scissors, they had to rip the paper. As I went through the stack, showcasing the folders, one young first grader (whose skills are lower than most) was quietly saying, 'No. No, don't show mine.' When his came up he hid his head in his hands and was obviously embarrassed. I remember feeling very uncomfortable about this, but not thinking that I was doing anything inappropriate or wrong. At the same time I knew this was not doing anything for this boy's self esteem or for my comfort as a teacher.

"When we talked about this issue in Classroom Management, I thought 'Yes,

students' work is no one's business, but their own (and mine, as the teacher.)' I wish I had realized this before I made the child feel ashamed in our class (who knows how many other children felt the same way?)

"I have not used the 'share all' strategy since the first incident. My mentor uses other strategies for sharing work, like asking who would like to share their story, picture, or whatever, and I have chosen this as one of the ways in which I will handle this issue."

Sometimes students just want to let me know that they were able to successfully apply a strategy that we had discussed in class. "I tried the technique of questioning like I told you I would. What a difference! Today has been the best day teaching I think I've had. I led most of the day so that [my mentor] could get some assessments done, and the questions were unbelievable. Students communicated better with me, took responsibility for their own learning and staying on task, and only needed very few reminders. I'm so excited!"

In some cases I found that students were communicating with me because they had to and not because they were truly engaged in the process. I would deliberately frame a question back to the student in an attempt to get a conversation started. I found this to be successful as indicated by the following exchange. "I'm really enjoying the texts for the classroom management class. They have great ideas in them and are reader friendly. I also really enjoy seeing you role play in the classroom with difficult situation. Thanks."

I answered the student with a question in attempt to get her to engage in e-mail conversations in greater depth. "A question for you. When you watch me doing a role play in class, do you think 'It's interesting to see what Barb does in this situation.' or do you think 'That's fine for Barb, but I'm not sure I could do that.' I

really am hoping for an honest answer from you. I do a lot of role playing with students, but I never know if watching me helps folks internalize practices or creates more uncertainty. What do you think?"

As you will see, the student spent time providing me with a thoughtful opinion on the issue of role playing, thereby engaging in the e-mail communication process at a deeper level than she was in her previous message. "In response to your questions about role playing in our class, I am uncertain about what approach to take when put in uncomfortable situations with students. Seeing you role play reinforces to me an appropriate way to deal with the situation. I do not want to respond in the way my mind is telling me, which is what I have seen from others and certainly not the philosophy being taught. After seeing you role play a common situation that I was in, I tried to respond in a manner similar to yours. It has helped me a lot. You can talk all day about how we should respond in situations, but it is more powerful to me to see it. I think all the interns have been in a power struggle with a student and will be again in the future. I hope others get as much from the role playing as I do."

I responded with: "Thanks. That really helps. I need to know from you that the strategies I'm modeling are ones you all will feel comfortable trying. I really appreciate the feedback. Thanks for taking the time to do it."

I found these one-on-one correspondences to be rewarding in that I was able to celebrate successes with some students, commiserate with others and provide advice as needed. I came to the conclusion that the use of Internet communications was worth doing despite the amount of time required. With all students engaged in the process of Internet conversations, I did not see a correlation between those students who demonstrated a high proficiency with management strategies in their

second video tapes as I had the year before. That leads me to think my suspicion that the high achieving students enrolled the year before had used the Internet because they were motivated to do so might be closer to the truth than the idea that Internet communication resulted in a better command of management skills. I did note that the higher achieving students in the second group communicated with me more frequently than did other students. And despite the lack of correlation between Internet communications and evidence of proficiency, I believe the process is a worthy one.

Assessing Student Growth

At the end of the term, I shifted the focus of my research to the second video tapes done by the students. As I had the year before, I employed a survey form on which students could provide me with their feedback on the means of course assessment, which was accomplished by viewing the second video tape together. I did not include any questions about the e-mail process because I wanted to compare their responses to the survey I had administered the year before, when I was not using e-mail communication as an institutionalized piece of the course.

It is important to note that the survey respondents from the 1995 cohort were also asked to respond to a scoring guide which the 1994 cohort did not have.

The survey questions were as follow:

1. I thought this form of assessment allowed me to have input into the grade I would receive.
2. I thought this form of assessment required too much time to prepare and complete.

3. I thought this form of assessment lessened or alleviated my stress. (When I administered the survey the second time, I did alter the wording of this item to read "I thought this form of assessment lessened or alleviated my stress over what grade I would receive.")
4. I thought this form of assessment allowed me to fairly represent my work in this class.

The survey was scored with a modified Lickert scale ranging from a 1 indicating Strongly Agree to 6 indicating Strongly Disagree. From the first group of students who responded during the Fall term of 1994, I only received back 13 forms. The low N, 13 respondents out of a potential N of 28, may cloud the reliability of the responses. The second group, from the Fall term of 1995, only returned 11 forms out of a possible N of 30.

Table 1

	1994		1995	
Item 1	Strongly Agree	10	Strongly Agree	10
	Agree	2	Agree	1
	Strongly Disagree	1	Strongly Disagree	0
Item 2	Strongly Agree	1	Strongly Agree	0
	Somewhat Agree	0	Somewhat Agree	1
	Disagree	1	Disagree	4
	Strongly Disagree	11	Strongly Disagree	6

Item 3	Strongly Agree	6	Strongly Agree	4
	Agree	2	Agree	0
	Somewhat Agree	4	Somewhat Agree	5
	Somewhat Disagree	1	Somewhat Disagree	2
Item 4	Strongly Agree	9	Strongly Agree	12
	Agree	0	Agree	1
	Somewhat Agree	0	Somewhat Agree	1
	Strongly Disagree	1	Strongly Disagree	0

As can be seen in Table 1 there was no significant difference between the two groups surveyed on any of the items. Even clarifying the wording on Item 3 did not result in a significant difference between the groups. As mentioned earlier the N was small for both groups and may not reveal a response to the survey that can be implied to the rest of each year's group.

The survey form also contained two response items. Again these items were the same for each group.

Item A read: "I felt this form of course assessment was....." and Item B read: "If I were to change one thing about this form of assessment, it would be...." I will discuss the items in reverse order. Most of the responses to Item B in the 1994 cohort addressed two issues. The first was a request for a scoring guide which I did institute the following year. The second most frequent response was to ask for an opportunity to view the first tape with me in the same way the second tape is viewed. In some cases, students requested viewing more than one tape with me. This latter comment showed up on half of the 1995 responses as well. As much as

this would be a useful process for all of us, it is a request that cannot be honored. Viewing the tapes in one-on-one half hour conferences takes at least three full days. I am only able to view second tapes with the students because I schedule the conferences during finals' week. I am responsible for two courses during Fall term and do not give exams in either. No other instructor in the Master of Arts in Teaching program gives exams, so this week is relatively free of time commitments for both me and my students. They are in their site placements, but coming to campus for a brief conference with me does not appreciably cut into that time.

Responses to the other open-ended item are far more varied and confirm for me the value of using of video technology as a tool for assessment. I have chosen to exclusively cite comments from the 1995 cohort. There were no negative responses to this process from either group, but the second round of surveys included responses of greater depth than did those of the first round. This might be attributable to the fact that the second group had become more accustomed to giving me lengthy feedback through our e-mail conversations.

One student in the 1995 cohort wrote "I think any assessment should take some time and deep reflection. You gave us the choice of writing up the scoring guide or discussing it with you which I thought was helpful." Another student wrote that this form of assessment "pushed me to see my professional growth by displaying, analyzing and verbalizing what I learned." Another comment was that this form of assessment proved "beneficial. It forced me to sit down and reflect on my progress over the term. I have learned to view my video tapes with a critical eye, but with a focus on improving my teaching. The scording guide was clear and I knew what was expected of me for this term." And another student said "It was very equitable...it did give me a lot of control over choices; it also required me to

produce what I felt was good work. For me, it was a little more stressful just because I became rather comfortable with the cram and take a multiple choice test form. I learned more this way, however." Other responses to this item typically cited their sense of ownership over the process and the grade they would receive.

Conclusion

There are many educators taking a serious look at what is being called "virtual universities." From my limited perspective, I believe that the incorporation of technology into traditional course delivery has enhanced the learning opportunities for me and my students. In a ten-year quest for ways to effectively teach classroom management strategies that are equitable and fair, I strongly feel that the evidence emerging from my on-going study related to the uses of the Internet and video taping indicates the combination of the two technologies result in meaningful interactions throughout the course and a means of assessment that makes clear the professional growth of the students.

An additional benefit of this course delivery design is that requiring students to use the technologies helps to ensure that they will become familiar with them and be able to teach their uses to their own students. Anecdotally, I have already observed this outcome. Students often tell me that because our program places such a heavy emphasis on technology in my course and elsewhere, they are called upon in the field placement sites to help others learn how to use the internet or to help with the running of a video camera. In fact, our students began a spontaneous exchange on their own listserv the following term decrying the lack of technological savvy among their mentor teachers and seeking ways to incorporate technology more fully into their curriculum designs. My increased familiarity with the Internet has resulted in similar occurrences. I now have my own colleagues asking me to

teach them how to use Netscape as well as the Internet.

I must restate what I noted earlier, which is the amount of time required for Internet interactions when using it as a pedagogical tool. The time demanded for meaningful interactions is not inconsequential, however, the topic of equitable classroom management is so personal, so close to the core of who we all are, that I believe the only way to truly process some of the deeply troubling issues that inevitably arise with students is most effectively served through the one-on-one communication format afforded by the Internet.

Similarly, I have become convinced, after many trials and errors, that the best way to assess professional growth in the area of classroom management is by meeting with students on a one-to-one basis to view their video tapes and discuss their achievement of the goals they set for themselves earlier in the term. There is no way to fake a video tape. The strategies are there or they are not. One student brought in a tape for the final conference and it showed her using none of the strategies we had talked about in class or that she had read about. She set no expectations for the lesson, did not engage students in any conversations about behaviors and her response to their speaking out was "Shhhhh." When I asked her to explain how the tape demonstrated her achievement of the goals she had set for herself, she admitted it didn't. I recommended that she receive an Incomplete for the term and video tape herself again. She seemed upset but accepted my suggestion.

A month later I viewed another tape she had done and it clearly showed a remarkable improvement over the other. I congratulated her on how well she had done and suggested that I thought she was probably pretty upset with me at the end of our last meeting. She said no, she hadn't been upset, she had been embarrassed at

wasting my time. I was struck by her understanding that she had not done as well as she could have and that she felt the same amount of ownership over the previous failure as she did over her subsequent success.

I have become a firm believer in the benefits of technology in teaching...I think it has particular and special applications to teaching classroom management. I look forward to continuing this study on the how as well as the what of effective course delivery.

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Appendix A

Scoring Guide for Classroom Management

1.

I read in excess of 5 selections from each of the books required for the course.

I engaged in electronic communication with the instructor at least once a week.

I tried out a wide variety of discipline strategies that I read about, heard about or that were discussed in class. I made certain these management strategies were acceptable to my mentor.

I continually strove to avoid creating highly visible students with my management strategies.

My second video tape demonstrates that I was able to incorporate a variety of management strategies into my teaching.

My second video tape demonstrates that I stated expectations for the lesson, refocused the students as necessary, and used other student-appropriate strategies while teaching.

My second video tape demonstrates that I achieved my goals for this course. Additional evidence of excellent work.

The above being achieved, I believe my grade should be an A. _____

2.

I read some (2 or 3) selections from each of the books required for the course.

I engaged in electronic communication with the instructor once a week.

I tried out 3 or 4 discipline strategies that I read about, heard about or that were discussed in class. I made certain these management strategies were acceptable to my mentor.

Although I tried not to, there were times (2 or 3) when I created highly visible students with my management strategies.

My second video tape demonstrates that I was able to incorporate 3 or 4 management strategies into my teaching.

My second video tape demonstrates that I stated expectations for the lesson, but did not always refocus the students as necessary.

My second video tape demonstrates that I achieved most of my goals for this course.

Additional evidence of good work.

The above being achieved, I believe my grade should be a B. _____

3.

I read 1 or 2 selections from each of the books required for the course.

I engaged in electronic communication with the instructor less than once a week.

I tried out a few (1 or 2) discipline strategies that I read about, heard about or that were discussed in class. I made certain these management strategies were acceptable to my mentor.

Although I tried not to, I found myself creating highly visible students more than 5 times during the term.

My second video tape demonstrates that I was able to incorporate 1 or 2 management strategies into my teaching.

My second video tape demonstrates that I did not state all the expectations for the lesson that would have led to a well managed experience and failed to refocus students as necessary.

My second video tape demonstrates that I achieved 1 or 2 of my goals for this course.

Additional evidence of average work.

The above being achieved, I believe my grade should be a C. _____

Appendix B

This notice is to inform you that

_____, an intern teacher from Oregon State University's Professional Teacher Education Program will, at various times, wish to video tape a lesson he or she is teaching during the 1995-96 school year and your child might be included within the camera's view of the classroom. **However, your child will not be video taped at all without your approval.** Please understand that these video tapes: 1) will remain confidential, 2) be reserved by the intern for personal use only and 3) will not be used in any commercial way.

I approve _____

I do not approve _____

Child's Name _____

Signed _____ (Parent's Name)

Date _____

This notice is to inform you that

_____, an intern teacher from Oregon State University's Professional Teacher Education Program will, at various times, wish to video tape a lesson he or she is teaching during the 1995-96 school year and your child might be included within the camera's view of the classroom. **However, your child will not be video taped at all without your approval.** Please understand that these video tapes: 1) will remain confidential, 2) be reserved by the intern for personal use only and 3) will not be used in any commercial way.

I approve _____

I do not approve _____

Child's Name _____

Signed _____ (Parent's Name)

Date _____